

FANS LEFT EARLY

By 'NOVA'

Wycombe Wanderers 1,
Maidstone 1.

MAIDSTONE officials, gazing in admiration at the 1,500 or so fans who turned up at Loakes Park for the Isthmian league game on Saturday, were amazed that so many people had decided to watch a middle of the table battle which had very little bearing on anything. Ninety minutes later after seeing a pitifully unexciting and often boring encounter, exactly why the fans turned up at all still remained a mystery.

Maidstone would have been lucky to have got 500 spectators for this match, I was told. Well quite frankly this kind of play, without bite or method, enterprise or effort, should not have been watched by five dozen. Yet there could be no excuses, conditions were perfect.

Admittedly Wycombe were without wingman menace Paul Hodges, ruled out only ten minutes before the start with slight food poisoning, and regulars, Pullin and French. But not even they could have altered the way the other players frittered away golden scoring chances.

It was while Lewis was doing quite well that Wycombe looked the most dangerous, and as a reward for their early attacks Lowen headed a good goal.

But after quarter of an hour a silly slip let Clay give Candey, usually well handed by Sewell, an easy chance to equalise. Horseman almost put Wycombe straight back in the lead with a fine shot that just flashed wide and then Bunting made two wonderful saves. But that was the end of the excitement for that half.

Maidstone opened the second half strongly and a Candey drive was brilliantly pushed away by Bunting. With Gale, Roystone and new boy Baker showing up well, the Kent side never looked dangerous again, but neither did the Wycombe forwards.

If Worley had been used a little more the result might have been different. Instead the Wanderers attacks were usually launched by long kicks down the middle for Balson and Lowen, who could do nothing right. The crowd hooted in derision as they made for the exits long before the end, certain that there would be no further score. How right they were. In fact I am sure if the teams had played another ninety minutes they could not have got the ball into the net again.

Wycombe.—C. Bunting; J. Beck, P. Sewell; C. Gale, P. Roystone, B. Baker; L. Worley, A. Lewis, P. Lowen, J. Balson, T. Horseman.

Maidstone.—C. Balderston; F. Baker, J. Shed; J. Dipper, D. Leonard, S. Davies, M. Candey, A. Sunnucks, M. Clay, T. Mellings, R. Dawe.